

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
THE DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH
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INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

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To: The Under Secretary *MR*
Through: S/S *per*
From: R. Gordon Arneson *Def*
Subject: Intelligence Note: Khrushchev's Assumption of Soviet Premiership

The assumption of the Chairmanship of the USSR Council of Ministers by N. S. Khrushchev marks a dramatic step in his concentration of political authority, and a further blow to collective leadership in the Soviet regime.

By adding the Premiership to the office of First Secretary, which he continues to occupy, Khrushchev reversed the trend (established in the Soviet Union immediately after Stalin's death and thereafter applied to the satellites) of introducing a clear demarcation of authority as between top offices in the Party and the government.

In deciding to unite the leadership of both the Party and government, Khrushchev must have had to overcome reservations from leaders apprehensive that this kind of concentration of authority might lead to a renewal of Stalinist excesses.

Although in his new post Khrushchev controls the Committee of State security (KGB) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), their subordination to strict Party control has been proclaimed as a central feature of destalinization. At the top of the structure, this presumably meant subordination of the police to the Presidium as a whole. It now remains to be seen whether this collective control will be maintained.

As government chief, Khrushchev will be able to inject his own type of forceful guidance directly into the management of industry. In connection with the recent reorganization of the latter, as well as in the MTS change, Khrushchev may have felt that he was handicapped in overcoming bureaucratic resistance and inertia by his lack of a command post in the bureaucracy.

Khrushchev's assumption of the Premiership probably was also motivated strongly by foreign policy considerations. Thus, a key factor may have been the Soviet assumption that there will be an early summit meeting. Khrushchev, who is not lacking in self-confidence, has shown vexation at taking a formal position secondary to Bulganin's, as he would be forced to do again if the Geneva situation were to be repeated.

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- 2 -

Khrushchev may thus be expected to concentrate the direction of Soviet foreign policy in his own hands even more fully than previously. This will probably not lead to any markedly new orientation in foreign policy but rather to continuation of the tempo of Soviet initiatives affecting East-West negotiations, and of Soviet policies vis-a-vis the underdeveloped countries, characteristic of Khrushchev's preeminence since 1955. At the same time, this further increment of power to Khrushchev within the leadership will very likely make him even less dependent than before on his colleagues in the Presidium, and this in turn could have important consequences for Soviet conduct. What these would be depends primarily on Khrushchev's personality, one aspect of which -- his impulsiveness -- has been exaggerated. In fact, he has been more impulsive in speech than in action. How the latest increase of his power will affect his behavior remains to be seen.

Khrushchev's move probably does not mean the return to Stalinist policies or methods. Khrushchev himself has been strongly committed to destalinization; his social and economic policies have in many cases, broken with those of Stalin; and he has shown no signs of reintroducing Stalinist terror as a method of rule.

A similar memorandum has been addressed to the Secretary.

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